

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9266
INFO AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ADDIS ABABA 3392

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EWWT, ET
SUBJ: CONDITIONS AT ASSAB PORT

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1990

SUMMARY: ASSAB PORT TRIP REPORT BY EXPATRIATE INDICATES ASSAB PORT AREA STILL HEAVILY CONGESTED WITH SOME 150,000 MT IMPORT CARGO. LACK OF INLAND TRANSPORT CONTINUES TO BE MAJOR BOTTLENECK. NEVERTHELESS, PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT ARE ENCOURAGING. CURRENTLY ONLY 13 VESSELS AWAITING BERTHS. FASTER TURNAROUND ON ASSAB-ADDIS TRUCK ROUTE AND REOPENING OF DJIBOUTI - ADDIS RAILROAD, POSITIVE FACTORS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED COPY OF TRIP REPORT TO ASSAB BY EXPATRIATE MANAGER OF FOREIGN SHIPPING AGENT WITH OFFICES IN ETHIOPIA. TRIP WAS MADE JUNE 30 - JULY 2, 1978. MAIN POINTS OF INTEREST IN THE REPORT ARE PRESENTED BELOW.

2. IMPORT CARGO LYING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE
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THE PORT AREA ON JULY 1 WAS ABOUT 150,000 MT. THE SPACE WITHIN THE PORT IS CRAMMED AND LARGE AREAS INSIDE AND SURROUNDING THE TOWN ARE BEING UTILIZED TO ACCOMMODATE THE OVERFLOW. THERE IS A GREAT STRAIN ON THE LIMITED TRANSPORT AND CRANEAGE SERVICES AND CARGO CARE AND SECURITY IS A PROBLEM. LACK

OF TRANSPORT TO INLAND AREAS IS STILL THE
MAJOR DRAWBACK.

3. AS OF JULY 1 THERE WERE ONLY 13 VESSELS AT ANCHORAGE
AWAITING BERTHS, A GREAT IMPROVEMENT ON THE SITUATION
SIX MONTHS AGO.

4. TELEPHONE AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS WITH ASSAB ARE
OFTEN DIFFICULT.

5. THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT IS NOW BEING UTILIZED BY
ASSAB PORT AUTHORITIES:

63 FORK LIFTS (SOME 35 OF WHICH ARE NEW AND
WERE NOT FULLY OPERATIONAL ON JULY 1)
45 TRACTORS UNITS
90 TRAILERS
10 MOBILE CRANES (ONE OF 20 TONS AND ONE OF
150 TONS CAPACITY)

6. SINCE THE TAKEOVER OF ALL STEVEDORING BY THE PORT
AUTHORITY, DIFFICULTIES (UNSPECIFIED - ED.) HAVE
ARISEN BETWEEN THE PORT AUTHORITIES AND SHIPPING FORWARDING
AGENTS. EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO OVERCOME
THESE DIFFICULTIES AND IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF THE
PORT.

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7. THERE IS A DAILY "BERTHING MEETING" AT THE OFFICE
OF THE PORT MANAGER (ATO MULATU) AT WHICH OFFICIALS OF
THE PORT AND THE VARIOUS SHIPPING AGENTS WORK OUT
BERTHING AND DISCHARGE SCHEDULES. (ATO MULATU
REPORTEDLY WAS REPLACES AS PORT MANAGER IN MID-JULY - ED.)

8. THE TRANSPORT COORDINATOR (ATO MERSA) IS CHARGED
WITH ALLOCATING TRANSPORT TO HANDLE IMPORT CARGO. HOWEVER,
HE IS OFTEN OVERRULED BY MORE SENIOR OFFICIALS
WHO REDIRECT TRANSPORT TO WHEREVER THE "CRISIS" POINT
IS.

9. COMMENT: THE CONGESTION AT ASSAB PORT IS SLOWLY
BEING ALLEVIATED. CONDITIONS SHOULD CONTINUE TO IMP-
ROVE AS TRUCK TRUN AROUND ON THE ASSAB - ADDIS RUN HAS
BEEN REDUCED TO ABOUT 2 - 2 1/2 DAYS, PRIMARILY BECAUSE
SECURITY CONDITIONS NOW ALLOW TRUCKS TO TRAVEL AT
NIGHT. ALSO CONTRIBUTING TO THE IMPROVING SITUATION
ARE THE TWO TRAINS DAILY WHICH DEPART FROM DJIBOUTI
FOR ADDIS, EACH TRANSPORTING ABOUT 200 TONS OF
CARGO.

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